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## Notes on some birds of northeastern Brazil (2)

by Dante Martins Teixeira, Jorge B. Nacinovic &  
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In the last few years we have accumulated new records on the distribution of northeastern Brazilian birds. This report follows Teixeira *et al.* (1986), q.v. and is also based on the field work performed by the Ornithological

Section of Museu Nacional in the States of Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte and Ceará, and also in the Fernando de Noronha Federal Territory. Specimens in the Museu Nacional ornithological collection are referred to by the initials MN plus the respective catalogue number. English names and sequence of the species follow Meyer de Schauensee (1970).

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Between 11 and 13 June 1986, an immature specimen, in typical barred plumage, was observed on the artificial lakes of Fernando de Noronha Island (03°50'S, 32°24'W), side by side with *Bubulcus ibis* and *Ardeola ralloides* (see below). This seems to be the first record of this widely distributed Old World species for the Americas (cf. Blake 1977, Hancock & Elliot 1978, Hellmayr & Conover 1948 and others); even though vagrants of some Palaearctic herons (*Ardea cinerea*, *Egretta garzetta*) have already been recorded in South America (cf. e.g. Benson & Dowsett 1969, Novaes 1978), the occurrence of 3 different species at the same time and in the same place is quite extraordinary and difficult to interpret – it could be linked to unusual weather conditions.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

Discontinuously distributed, the Cattle Egret has been observed in southern, southeastern and central Brazil from Rio Grande do Sul north to Mato Grosso, southern Goiás and southeastern Minas Gerais. There are also some few records from Pará and Amazonas (Sick 1965, 1985). The Museu Nacional obtained an immature male (MN 34408, gonads 10 mm, 250 g, 480 mm total length) from the municipality of Passo de Camaragibe (c. 9°15'S, 35°30'W), northeastern Alagoas, in September 1985. We observed 2 other individuals on Fernando de Noronha Island between 11 and 16 June 1986. In conjunction with the records of *Ardea purpurea* and *Ardeola ralloides*, these records seem to point to arrivals of Old World birds in the Americas rather than an expansion of Brazilian populations to the northeast.

SQUACCO HERON *Ardeola ralloides*

Widely distributed in the Old World, the Squacco Heron seems to be unrecorded for the Americas (cf. Blake 1977, Hellmayr & Conover 1948 and others). Between 11 and 13 June 1986, we observed a non-breeding adult of this species on Fernando de Noronha Island, side by side with *Ardea purpurea* and *Bubulcus ibis* (see above).

WHITE-COLLARED KITE *Leptodon forbesi*

Described by Swann in 1922, *L. forbesi* is known from a single skin, probably an immature specimen, collected by W. A. Forbes in Pernambuco, northeastern Brazil (Forbes 1881, Hellmayr & Conover 1949, Swann 1922, 1935). In recent ornithological publications (Brown & Amadon 1968, Meyer de Schauensee 1970), *L. forbesi* has been unanimously considered to be an "aberrant young" of the Grey-headed Kite *Leptodon cayannensis*, a widely distributed species (Accipitridae) which has never been recorded in extreme northeastern Brazil (Pinto 1938, 1964, 1978, Sick 1985). In January 1986, however, the Museu Nacional obtained 3 specimens of *Leptodon* from the residual forests of Alagoas: a

breeding pair (MN 34416, male, gonads 12 mm, 580 g, 503 mm total length; MN 34417, female, gonad 25 mm, 550 g, 490 mm total length) from the lowland forests of São Miguel dos Campos (c. 09°47'S, 36°50'W), and a second female (MN 34418, gonad 22 mm, 600 g, 500 mm total length) from the highland forests of Serra Branca, Murici (c. 09°15'S, 35°50'W). These birds agree with *L. forbesi* descriptions in several characters such as the contrasting nuchal collar, the white underwing coverts, and a tail which is distinct from the *L. cayannensis* pattern. This material is presently under study, but the preliminary data suggest that *L. forbesi* is not an "abnormal young" of *L. cayannensis*.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus*

Spottily distributed in Brazil, this species has only been recorded from Marajó Island, Ceará, Pernambuco and Paraná (Pinto 1938, 1964, 1978, Sick 1985). However, the Museu Nacional houses an adult female (MN 23591) collected by J. Moojen (no date) at Bom Jesus da Lapa, Bahia (c. 13°15'S, 43°25'W). We have also observed this species in the sugar-cane fields of São Miguel dos Campos, Alagoas, and in the forests of Guaramiranga, Serra do Baturité, Ceará (c. 4°20'S, 38°56'W) during the last 2 years.

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

In January 1986, we observed an adult flying over the lower Jequiá River drainage, municipality of São Miguel dos Campos, coastal Alagoas, and in March 1986 3 others were captured alive in Recife (c. 8°05'S, 34°53'W), Pernambuco. These seem to be the first records for the species in northeastern Brazil.

BAT FALCON *Falco rufigularis*

Widely distributed in South America, but not hitherto recorded from northeastern Brazil. On 20 February 1986, we observed one in the residual forests of the municipality of Porto das Pedras (c. 9°10'S, 35°20'W), coastal Alagoas.

BARE-FACED CURASSOW *Crax fasciolata*

During part of the period of Dutch rule in northeastern Brazil (17th century), naturalists and painters at the court of Maurice van Nassau-Siegen recorded the existence of a *Crax* species in the region. This bird, called 'Mituporanga' by Marcgrave (1648), was also figured in the colour pictures of the 'Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae' (see also Schneider 1938, Whitehead 1976, 1979). According to our recent analyses of the ornithological material produced in Dutch Brazil, this curassow could be identified as a young male of *Crax fasciolata*, perhaps *C. fasciolata pinima*, as the colour picture of the 'Theatrum' figures a specimen with yellow face (which denotes sub-adult condition, cf. Teixeira & Sick 1986) and with the cere suffused with orange, which seems to be characteristic for males of *C. fasciolata pinima* from the lower Amazon. Rather surprisingly, this *Crax* from northeastern Brazil became extinct only in the 1930's according to information from old hunters in coastal Alagoas (Teixeira 1986). Of course it is impossible to decide if this *Crax* was an isolate population of *C. fasciolata pinima* or an independent taxon, and the Dutch Brazilian

zoological material seems to be the only documentation available on this vanished curassow.

GREAT-HORNED OWL *Bubo virginianus*

According to recent authors, this species was recorded in northeastern Brazil only by Reiser (1905), who described *Bubo virginianus deserti* from Juazeiro, northern Bahia (c. 9°25'S, 40°31'W). However, an example of this owl (presumably from coastal Pernambuco) was figured by G. Marcgrave (1648) in the 17th century, and we indeed observed a specimen of *B. virginianus* in the residual highland forests of Murici, Alagoas, on 19 January 1986. It is impossible to decide if these records are attributable to *B. virginianus deserti* or to the widely distributed *B. virginianus nacurutu*.

LONG-TAILED HERMIT *Phaethornis superciliosus*

In Brazil, this species is known from the Amazonian drainage (Meyer de Schauensee 1970, Pinto 1978). However, the Museu Nacional obtained a male (MN 33827, gonads 1 mm, 6.2 g, 169 mm total length) from the highland forests of Serra Branca, Murici, Alagoas, on 3 May 1984. Apparently this species also occurs in the residual lowland forests of this State.

BLACK-THROATED MANGO *Anthracothorax nigricollis*

Widely distributed in South America, this species has not previously been recorded in the extreme northeast of Brazil (cf. Hellmayr 1929, Pinto 1978). Nevertheless it is a rather common hummingbird in the residual forests of Alagoas, and the Museu Nacional obtained 2 males (MN 34486, gonads 2 mm, 7.2 g, 129 mm total length; MN 34487, gonads 3 mm, 8 g, 130 mm total length) from the municipality of São Miguel dos Campos, and a third male (MN 34488, gonads 2 mm, 6.5 g, 124 mm total length) from the municipality of Novo Lino (c. 9°01'S, 35°40'W) in January 1986.

FRILLED COQUETTE *Lophornis magnifica*

Known from eastern and central to southern Brazil (Bahia, Goiás and Mato Grosso south to Rio Grande do Sul), it also occurs in northeastern Brazil, whence we obtained an immature male (MN 34494, gonads less than 1 mm, 2.2 g, 77 mm total length) and an adult male (MN 34495, gonads 2 mm, 2.2 g, 78 mm total length) from Serra Branca, Murici, Alagoas, between 14 and 15 January 1986. Seen feeding on the flowers of *Inga affinis*.

VERSICOLOURED EMERALD *Amazilia versicolor*

Not previously recorded in northeastern Brazil. The Museu Nacional obtained a male (MN 34492, gonads 2 mm, 3.4 g, 96 mm total length) from Murici, Alagoas, on 14 January 1986. It was observed feeding on the flowers of *Inga affinis*.

RUFOUS HORNERO *Furnarius rufus*

Widely distributed in South America, but not hitherto recorded from the extreme northeast of Brazil (cf. Pinto 1978, Vaurie 1980). We obtained an adult male (MN 34525, gonads 4 and 2 mm, 42 g, 201 mm total length) from the lower Jequiá River drainage, municipality of São Miguel dos Campos, coastal Alagoas, on 26 December 1985. According to our

observations, the Rufous Hornero is a rather rare bird in this area, occurring side by side with the Wing-banded Hornero *Furnarius figulus*, which is very common.

GREATER BLACK-CAPPED FOLIAGE GLEANER *Philydor novaesi*

Described only in 1983, *P. novaesi* is known from 2 adult males from Serra Branca, Murici, Alagoas. In the last 4 years, however, we have obtained 4 additional specimens of this Furnariid from the type locality, including 3 females (MN 33873, collected on 21 November 1983, gonad 9 mm, 30 g, 195 mm total length; MN 34530, collected on 16 January 1986, gonad 12 mm, 48 g, 221 mm total length; MN 34531, collected on 20 January 1986, 36 g, 207 mm total length). According to this material, the females of *P. novaesi* are identical to males in plumage, and also show no trace of the bright rufous nuchal collar which is very conspicuous in the closely related Black-capped Foliage gleaner *Philydor atricapillus* from southeastern Brazil (Teixeira & Gonzaga 1983). As was observed with males, the females of *P. novaesi* are larger than specimens of *P. atricapillus* of the same sex, averaging culmen 18.2 mm, wing 93.4 mm, tail 85.6 mm. In comparison, a series of 68 females of *P. atricapillus* average culmen 15.7 mm, wing 82.1 mm and tail 75.0 mm.

WHITE-BROWED PURPLETUFT *Iodopleura isabellae*

Only recorded from the Amazonian drainage (Snow 1982), this species also occurs in northeastern Brazil, where we observed a nesting pair in the highland forests of Serra Branca, municipality of Murici, Alagoas on 10 May 1984. The nest was collected and agrees with the description made by Sick (1979), but it was impossible to obtain ornithological specimens. With its arboreal habits and small size, *I. isabellae* is difficult to observe in the forests of northeastern Brazil, which perhaps could explain the lack of records of this Amazonian bird in the lowland forests of the region (cf. Teixeira *et al.* 1986). It is also appropriate to mention here that *Iodopleura pipra leucopygia*, an enigmatic Cotingidae apparently known only from 2 specimens obtained by Whitely in the last century, has a doubtful distribution, since this collector worked in both British Guiana and northeastern Brazil.

MAGPIE TANAGER *Cissopis leveriana*

The northeastern Brazilian population of the Magpie Tanager is identified usually as *C. leveriana major*; it also occurs from Bahia and Goiás south to Rio Grande do Sul (Hellmayr 1936, Pinto 1944, Sick 1985). In recent years, however, we have observed and collected specimens of this Thraupid from northeastern Brazil which obviously should be attributed to *C. leveriana leveriana* from Amazonia, distinguishable from *C. leveriana major* by its smaller size and the plain white back. On 24 February 1986, we obtained an adult female (MN 34562, gonad 9 mm, 69 g, 325 mm total length) from Matriz de Camaragibe (c. 9°10'S, 35°32'W), coastal Alagoas, which had a conspicuously plain white back, with the wing measuring only 103 mm and the tail 134 mm. This seems to be one more example of an Amazonian bird which also occurs in the lowland forests of northeastern Brazil (cf. Teixeira *et al.* 1986).

COMMON WAXBILL *Estrilda astrild*

Introduced from Africa in about the 18th century, the Common Waxbill has a very local distribution in Brazil, inhabiting man-made landscapes, especially where some species of exotic African Graminae also occur (Sick 1985). In northeastern Brazil, *E. astrild* has apparently been recorded only from Recife, but we discovered a second established population in Guaramiranga, Serra de Baturité, Ceará. According to local informants, the Common Waxbill was introduced into this locality in 1971 by the Capushin prior in Ceará, who obtained cage specimens from "a southern State". Nowadays it is a rather common species in the environs of Guaramiranga, where the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, another introduced bird, also occurs.

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## Clinal variation and subspeciation in the White-crowned Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*

by Alan Tye

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The type specimen of the White-crowned Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* (C. L. Brehm, 1855) was collected at Korosko, Egypt, a locality now submerged in Lake Nasser (22°40'N, 32°20'E). Hartert (1913) later described a race *O.l. aegra* (type from Algeria) on the basis of smaller size. Meinertzhagen (1930) claimed that no size difference existed between nominate and *aegra* and suppressed the latter, but at the same time he described a new subspecies, *O.l. ernesti*, from Sinai and Palestine (type from Sinai) distinguished by a longer bill and bluer, glossier plumage. Meinertzhagen's arrangement has been generally followed since, though most authors (e.g. Vaurie 1959, White 1962) have pointed out that *ernesti* is not clearly separated, but intergrades with nominate in Egypt. Vaurie (1959) also suggested that *ernesti* had larger, darker spots near the tips to the outer rectrices.

In the present paper I examine clinal variation in size, colouration and tail pattern in this species, and the implications of such variation for subspecific nomenclature. The results presented here refer to specimens at the British Museum (Natural History).

### Distribution

For the purpose of analysing clinal variation I divided the species' range into 9 populations, some of which correspond with natural 'gaps' in the range (Fig. 1), where the habitat is unsuitable for breeding, or where the species seems to be either absent or present at very low densities. Such gaps occur in the western Egyptian desert (between populations 2 and 3), the Gulf of Suez (between 3 and 4), highland Eritrea (between 6 and 7), lowland western Sudan (between 6 and 8: cf. Lynes 1925) and lowland Sahara (between 8 and 9, 9 and 1/2). In addition, population 9 consists of several sub-populations on each of the central Saharan massifs, separated